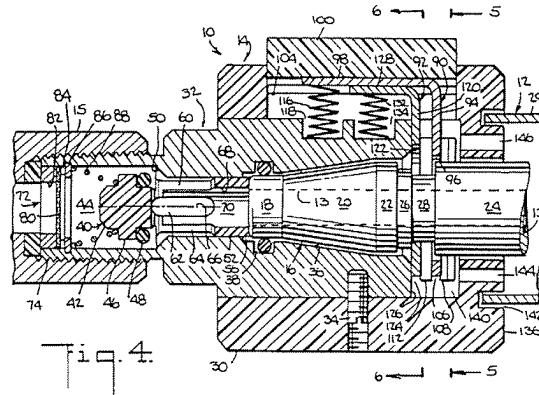


This is in response to the non-final Office Action dated May 18, 2006. Claim 1 is amended. Support for the amendment is found, for example, at page 14, lines 24-27 and Figures 3A and 3C of the present application. Claims 1-8 and 16-19 remain pending. Reconsideration is requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim 1 recites a shroud portion being a wall extending outward from the outer sidewall and adjacent and around said outer member of said latch assembly, said wall extending in a direction transverse to said outer surface, and a top portion of said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as an outermost portion of said outer member protrudes from said outer surface when the outer member is in a non-depressed state.

5

In contrast, a top portion of coupling member 14 disclosed by Carstens does not protrude from coupling body 32 at least a same distance as an outermost portion of button 100 when button 100 is in a non-depressed state, as shown below.



Carstens, Fig. 4. In other words, an outermost portion of button 100 extends a greater distance from coupling body 32 than a top portion of coupling member 14 when button 100 is in a non-depressed state.

For at least these reasons, Carstens fails to disclose or suggest a top portion of said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as an outermost portion of said outer member protrudes from said outer surface when the outer member is in a non-depressed state, as recited by claim 1. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 1, as well as claims 2-8 that depend therefrom, are therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carstens. This rejection is respectfully traversed, and the correctness of the rejection is not conceded.

Claims 16-19 all depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection are therefore requested.

Application Serial No. 10/612,475
Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody
Art Unit: 3679

PATENT
Docket No.: 1945.185US01

With these remarks, Applicants believe that the claims now pending are in a condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested. If any further questions arise, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: July 17, 2006

By: Robert A. Kalinsky
Name: Robert A. Kalinsky
Reg. No.: 50,471